CHINESE NATIONAL UNITY VS. UYGHUR SEPARATISM

CAN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES INTEGRATED WITH A CUSTOMIZED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN HELP AVOID A CULTURAL COLLISION?

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A strategic priority for China's economic development is the diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the national economy and society.[1] To support this strategy, an investment of billions of US dollars is underway to develop a solid telecommunications infrastructure across the country.

China is striving to participate in the information economy, characterized as an economy that is "informational, global, and networked."[2] To the extent that China's new information infrastructure facilitates a flow of economic-oriented information across networked telecommunications links that are both national and international, one can say that China is participating in the information economy. However, a stark digital divide exists between the eastern/western regions and between the urban/rural sectors. Not all Chinese citizens participate in the information economy including the Uyghurs.

The Uyghurs claim northwestern China as their ancestral homeland and chafe under Chinese rule. In the 1990s to early 2000s, dissatisfaction with the Chinese government erupted into violence advocating independence. China cracked down hard on them. Cultural/religious expression is currently repressed and there are accelerated attempts to assimilate the Uyghurs into the more dominant Han culture. Further, the Uyghurs have been excluded from economic opportunities presented by the "Develop the West" campaign due to discrimination and lack of skills. Poverty alleviation programs targeting

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[1] Xiudian Dai, "ICTs in China's development strategy," in *China and the Internet*, eds. Christopher R. Hughes and Gudrun Wacker (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 9-10.
[2] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2000), 77.

the Uyghurs are few. Though deeply unhappy with current repressive measures, anecdotal evidence reveals that at least some Uyghurs could live with Chinese rule if they were allowed to maintain their traditions and participate more equitably in the economy.

A poverty alleviation program based on information services could potentially help them do just that. This paper proposes telecenters customized specifically for the Uyghurs. With strong emphasis placed on the informational benefits of the telecenters and surveillance measures enforced, any security threat perceived by the government could be minimized. With much of the telecommunications infrastructure already in place, it is criminal not to use it to benefit the poorest of China's citizens.

This paper provides background on what led to current tensions between the Uyghurs and the Chinese government. I have then analyzed from a *communications perspective* five policies practiced by the PRC to reduce the "Uyghur threat" and develop a national Chinese culture with a greater sense of national unity in Xinjiang. Those five policies are the politicization of Islam, migration of Han Chinese into the region, and the use of language, education and media to accelerate assimilation of the Uyghurs into the dominant Han culture. The Uyghurs are deeply dissatisfied with these policies.

The author encourages China to give the Uyghurs the opportunity to participate in the information economy. Greater prosperity (and loosened restrictions on their cultural expression) will go a long way to creating a happier environment for these people and potentially mitigate their desire for independence.

Chapter 2: China's Uyghur Muslims

Who are the Uyghurs? The Uyghurs are a Turkic people who migrated from northwestern Mongolia in 840 C.E.[3] One branch moved westward to the Central Asian grasslands settling in areas across Central Asia to Kashgar and incorporating the western portion of the Tarim Basin. A second branch settled in what is today the area surrounding Turpan. Though they had similar forebears, their histories are different. The people in Turpan eventually evolved into a sedentary, elite Turkic society that primarily practiced Buddhism. They were the people originally known as Uyghurs. On the whole, they maintained positive relations with the China-based states lying to the east such as the Tang and Song, and exercised important cultural influence on the Mongols.[4] The people in Kashgar were far more influenced by the history of Central Asia and the Turks and converted to Islam in 950 C.E. By the 15th century, the Buddhist Uyghurs of Turpan had also converted to Islam. Today, Sunni Islam is intrinsic to the Uyghur identity.

The land Uyghurs call "home" comprises the geography within the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the northwest corner of China. This territory covers 1.66 million square miles making up one-sixth of China's land mass. The XUAR borders eight countries: Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Given its strategic location, Xinjiang is China's gateway to Central Asia.

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[3] "C.E." refers to Common Era corresponding to AD but is religiously neutral.
[4] James A. Millward and Peter C. Purdue, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 41.

Much of the geography of Xinjiang is marked by rugged mountains, basins and desert. The forbidding Taklamakan Desert lies in the Tarim Basin, nearly ringed by mountains. It is in the oases surrounding the Taklamakan Desert, receiving their water from the glaciers and snow melt from the nearby mountains, where most Uyghurs settled. Long distances, dry and desolate, separated the oases and discouraged communication among them. As a result, oasis dwellers developed an identity closely associated with their respective oasis and practiced oasis endogamy.[5] The oases most important to Uyghur life and culture today are Kashgar, Khotan, Turpan, Hami and Ili, and the steppe oasis Urumqi which is the capital of Xinjiang.[6] (Please see the map of Xinjiang on page 47.)

In spite of its remoteness, the overall population of the Xinjiang Region is about 18.5 million people based on the 2000 census.[7] The Uyghurs are the primary ethnic group at 46.5% of the population and the Han Chinese run a close second at 38.7%.[8] Other ethnic groups that also reside in Xinjiang are the Kazak, Hui (Chinese Muslim), Mongolian, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Tajik, Ozbek, Manchu, Daur, Tatar and Russian.[9]

Uyghur society is comprised of three groups: the peasants, the merchants, and the "intellectuals." The peasants are mostly farmers, primarily rural, and the most

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[5] Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 108.
[6] Ibid., 25.
[7] Stanley W. Toops, "The Demography of Xinjiang," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 242.
[8] Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 140.
[9] Information Office of China's State Council, *White Paper on the History and Development of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region* (Part One: "Xinjiang Has Been a Multi-ethnic Region Since Ancient Times"), May 26, 2003 (accessed November 6, 2004); available from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-05/26/content_887242.htm.

conservative practitioners of Islam. They do not often travel far from their respective

home base. The merchants engage in trade, both local and long-distance, and also

practice Islam.   However, a number of them have traveled extensively both within

mainland China and across Central Asia. They have gained a broader view of the world

than the peasants and have an appreciation for a secular education. The intellectuals are

the most educated of the Uyghurs and are the educators, administrators, writers,

historians and professors of the group. Some of them also function as Chinese

Communist Party officials (cadres). The intellectuals may live in oases (they all have an

affinity for the home oasis), but most live in Urumqi. They consider themselves Muslim,

but they are also secularist and strongly reject Islamic conservatism.[10]

While there are stories of success among the general Uyghur population, many of these

people suffer high rates of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. These subjects will be

addressed in the next section. Please see Appendix A for a more detailed account of the

geography of the Xinjiang region, the origins of the Uyghurs, a profile of the oases most

important to Uyghur society, and a discussion of the Uyghur social groups.

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[10] This description of the Uyghurs is summarized from Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*, op. cit.

Chapter 3: Uyghur Separatism and Promotion of Chinese National Unity

Contested claims to the land.   The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is currently a

land rife with ethnic tension between the Uyghurs and the ruling Han Chinese. The

history of this land has long been contested between them. The Uyghurs claim the land

as their ancestral homeland for thousands of years and usurped by the Chinese. The

Chinese claim the territory has been "an inseparable part of the unitary multi-ethnic

Chinese nation" since the Western Han Dynasty (206BC – 24 AD).[11] The Chinese claim

they have ruled the western regions for centuries. However, it was not until the 19th

century under the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), that the government consolidated

jurisdiction over the entire western regions and officially incorporated this territory into

the sovereign boundaries of what is today the People's Republic of China.[12]

Uyghur revolts and separatism. Given their contested claims over this land, the Uyghurs

chafe under Chinese rule. Since the mid-nineteenth century, there have been three revolts

that resulted in independent Uyghur states: the Kashgar Emirate in 1864-1877; the

Turkish Islamic Republic of East Turkestan (TIRET) focused in Kashgar from 1933-

1937; and the Eastern Turkestan Republic from 1944-1949 focused in the north at Yining

(Gulja) and supported by the Soviet Union. Each independent state was eventually pulled

back into the Chinese "motherland" by Chinese forces. The most recent spate of violence

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[11] Information Office of China's State Council, *White Paper on the History and Development of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region* (Part One: "Xinjiang Has Been a Multi-ethnic Region Since Ancient Times"), op. cit.
[12] Information Office of China's State Council, *White Paper on the History and Development of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region* (Part Three: "The Administration of Xinjiang by the Successive Central Governments")*,* May 26, 2003 (accessed November 6, 2004); available from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-05/26/content_887255.htm.

occurred in the 1990s stemming partially from relaxed governmental policies in the 1980s related to culture and religion that sparked a new wave of Uyghur nationalism. Encouraged by the independence achieved by their Central Asian neighbors after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Uyghur separatists began following a more aggressive and violent path to draw attention to their own cause for independence. Justin Rudelson recorded over 200 militant Uyghur actions occurring roughly in the decade from 1993-2003. These actions resulted in 162 deaths and included attacks on police stations, communications and electric power infrastructure, bombings of buses and public places, assassinations of judges and strikes against military bases.[13]

China's reaction. China practices zero tolerance toward separatism and reacted to this violence with draconian measures. The Strike Hard campaign, originally intended to battle crime, was expanded to crush the separatist movement. The campaign has now been absorbed into China's efforts to support President George Bush's "War on Terror." Reports of mass arrests, public sentencing rallies and high numbers of executions have drawn the attention of international human rights organizations. China's inclusion of Uyghur groups on the list of international terrorists even led President Bush to caution Chinese President Jiang Zemin that the "War on Terror" was not an excuse to persecute internal ethnic groups such as the Uyghurs.[14]

China's National Minorities Policy. In addition to making every effort (brutal or

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[13] Bates Gill and Matthew Oresman, *China's New Journey to the West: China's Emergence in Central Asia and Implications for U.S. Interests* (Washington, DC: The CSIS Press, 2003), 17.
[14] Susan V. Lawrence, "Why China Fears This Uyghur Exile," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Hong Kong: July 15, 2004, Vol. 167, Issue 28, 30-32 (accessed June 8, 2005); available from ProQuest.

otherwise) to stamp out the separatist movement, China has also instituted policies that appear to directly attack the Uyghur culture in an apparent reversal of China's National Minorities Policy. The National Minorities Policy asserts equality among all ethnic groups and enumerates various freedoms and rights granted to them by both the Constitution and Chinese law such as the freedom of religious belief, freedom of speech, the right to receive education, the right to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and the right to engage in literary and artistic creation and other cultural pursuits. [15] However, to continue enjoying these rights and freedoms, ethnic groups are required to "promote the development and prosperity of the nation, oppose ethnic splits and safeguard the unification of the country."[16]

The right to secede does not exist in the Chinese constitution. Further, Article 13 of the Criminal Law criminalizes separatist beliefs.[17] Thus the Chinese government condemns all separatist activity in Xinjiang or elsewhere as criminal, and all those participating in separatist activity as not only criminal but subject to execution.[18]

In order to eliminate separatist belief at its source, China has therefore instituted policies that reach into nearly every aspect of the lives of its Uyghur citizens. In so doing, it has generated great resentment among the Uyghurs. These new policies include the

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[15] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, "National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China, Part II. Adherence to Equality and Unity Among Ethnic Groups," *Government White Papers*, June 2000, Beijing (accessed January 13, 2005); available from http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/4/4.2.htm.
[16] Ibid.
[17] "CECC 2002 Annual Report: Xinjiang-Uighurs Section," op. cit.
[18] Dru C. Gladney, "The Chinese Program of Development and Control, 1978-2001," op. cit., with reference to Barry Sautman, "Legal Reform and Minority Rights in China," in *Handbook of Global Legal Policy*, ed. Stuart Nagel (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1999), 49-80.

following: the politicization of Islam, repression of cultural expression and accelerated attempts to assimilate Xinjiang's minority groups into the dominant Han culture, thus assuring greater national unity in the region. The policies, along with the steady immigration of Han Chinese into Xinjiang who are viewed as "foreign overlords who take land and jobs from local people,"[19] have exacerbated tensions between the Uyghurs and the Hans. Lastly, China's enormous "Develop the West" campaign that allocates billions of dollars annually to economically develop the western region seems to be passing most Uyghurs by. It is not surprising, then, that many Uyghurs feel that China is on a path to annihilate their culture, language and traditions.

The remainder of this chapter will take a *communications and messaging perspective* to analyze the policies taken by the Chinese to eliminate the separatist threat, beginning with the politicization of Islam and the immigration of Han Chinese into the region. The document will then move into an analysis of assimilative policies oriented toward language, education and media that are meant to instill a deeper conviction of Chinese national unity in Xinjiang. Before proceeding, let us first define terms that will be used in these analyses:

State: an "[i]ndependent political unit…with territorial boundaries that [is] internationally recognized by other states…[and is] internally governed."[20]

Nation: "[a] group of people often sharing common elements of culture such as religion

[19] Colin Mackerras, "Ethnicity in China: The Case of Xinjiang," *Harvard Asia Quarterly* Vol. VIII No. 1 (Winter 2004): 5.
[20] David Shively, Ph.D, "Geopolitics and Development, Chapter 1, Part 2," from *Geog 103S World Regional Geography*, University of Montana (accessed June 19, 2005); available from http://www2.umt.edu/geograph/shively/geog103/ch1_geopolitics_development.ppt#4.

or language, or a history or political identity."[21] The Hans and the Uyghurs represent different nations.

Nationalism: the attitude that members of a "nation" have when they care about their national identity, which is often defined in terms of a common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties. Members of a nation may seek to achieve or sustain some form of political sovereignty.[22]

Ethno-nationalism: refers to a strong cultural and regional identity expressed by minority nations within a given state.[23] The Uyghurs express ethno-nationalism within the People's Republic of China, in spite of the government's efforts to enjoin a greater sense of Chinese national unity among the minorities in Xinjiang.

Politicization of Islam. The Chinese government considers Islam the stimulus behind Uyghur separatism, as exemplified in this quote taken from the Hetian (Khotan) CCP Committee on January 5, 2002:

> "Since we launched our battle against Eastern Turkestan separatist forces, we found that religion, illegal religious activities and extremist religious thought have severely influenced, disturbed and infiltrated society and villages, and in particular, education."[24]

It is clear that the PRC sees its Islamic constituency a potential magnet for fundamental Islam. Evidence was found that some Uyghurs were aligned with al-Qaida and the Taliban and linked with the terrorism associated with those groups. Chinese propaganda

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Miscevic, Nenad, "Nationalism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2001 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.) (accessed June 19, 2005); available from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2001/entries/nationalism.
[23] Shively, op. cit.
[24] Human Rights Watch, "VI. Controlling Religion in the Education System," in *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*, April 2005 (accessed June 15, 2005); available from http://hrw.org/reports/2005/china0405/8.htm.

has thus conveniently connected Uyghur Islam and terrorism and uses the connection to justify continued repression of the Uyghurs. This is the case even though there has never been evidence that more than a few Uyghurs in Xinjiang are in fact terrorists.[25]

The Uyghurs deeply resent being called terrorists and observers in the region have reported that the Uyghurs are quietly fuming under new restrictions placed on their religious expression.[26] A telling remark was made by a Uyghur trader to an American journalist in October 2001, "Your army is so close, why doesn't it just attack China, too?"[27] Restrictions are imposed on all members of Uyghur society and violations can result in job loss, expulsion from school, fines, harassment of one's family, and administrative punishments including short-term detention.[28] Uyghur cadres (government officials) are barred from religious activities.[29] Boys are not allowed to attend mosque until they are 18 years old and children younger than 18 are not allowed to receive religious instruction, including private Koranic study at home.[30] Prayer or fasting is not allowed at the schools even at the university level.[31] The official reason for these

[25] Mackerras, "Ethnicity in China: The Case of Xinjiang," op. cit., 9.

[26] See Mackerras, "Ethnicity in China: The Case of Xinjiang;" Gluckman, "Strangers in their Own Land;" Marquand, "Pressure to Conform in west China;" and Dillon, *Xinjiang-China's Muslim Far Northwest* for especially revealing commentary about Uyghur reaction and resentment to restrictions placed on their observance of Islam.

[27] Forney, Matthew, "China's Own Islamic 'Extremists': It's never easy being a Uighur in today's China. Now it's even harder," *Time International*, October 22, 2001, v158, i16, p.37 (accessed January 20, 2005); available from InfoTrac Web: Expanded Academic ASAP.

[28] Human Rights Watch, "I. Summary," in *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*, April 2005 (accessed June 15, 2005); available from http://hrw.org/reports/2005/china0405/3.htm.

[29] Matthew Forney, "One Nation—Divided: Since Sept. 11, Beijing has been cracking down in Xinjiang. Decades of repression have already made native Uighurs strangers in their own land," *Time International*, March 25, 2002, v159, i11, p.38+ (accessed January 20, 2005); available from InfoTrac Web: Expanded Academic ASAP.

[30] Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "Xinjiang-Uighurs," in *CECC 2004 Annual Report,* October 5, 2004 (accessed May 29, 2005); available from http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/uighur/xinannrept04.php.

[31] Human Rights Watch, "VI. Controlling Religion in the Education System," op. cit.

restrictions is that young people should be studying at school (i.e., getting a secular education) and not praying.

During the years that children are not allowed religious instruction, they are being indoctrinated in the schools with messages exhorting Marxist atheism (reference the example mentioned in the education section of this document). One can infer that the Chinese are trying to ensure that by the time these children reach eighteen, they will be assimilated into the dominant Han atheistic culture (especially now that Han- and Uyghur-language schools are to be merged) and will not be interested in studying Islam. Needless to say, parents are unhappy with these rules as evidenced by the father who opines the inability to conduct normal religious household conversations with his son for fear of breaking the law:

> "…Neither at home nor at work are you supposed to talk to the children about religion. You just talk about it and it is illegal. Even with my own son, I am not supposed to tell him about Islam. How can this be possible?"[32]

The government also cracked down on Xinjiang's Islamic religious leaders and burned "tens of thousands of Uighur-language religious books."[33] Eight thousand imams were required to attend "political education sessions."[34] Today, all Islamic training and all public explanations of Islam, both oral and written, fall under state control.[35] Given how closely Uyghur identity is linked with Islam, it is not difficult to understand how these

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Joshua Kurlantzick, "Among the Uighurs: Muslim Minority of West China," *World and I*, March 2003, v18, i3, p.156 (accessed January 20, 2005); available from InfoTrac Web: Expanded Academic ASAP.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Graham E. Fuller and Jonathan N. Lipman, "Islam in Xinjiang," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 333.

restrictions and the anti-Uyghur/pro-atheist messages they imply are generating

resentment among these people.

Han immigration. China's encouragement of Han migration into Xinjiang is really a

story about colonization and stabilization of the region. It has little to do with Chinese

policies to bring the ethnic minorities into the national order (especially since inter-

marriage rarely occurs between the Hans and the Uyghurs). However, I present it

because the enormous presence of Han Chinese (growing from 6% of the population in

1953[36] to 38.7% in 2000) is one of the two main issues underlying current Uyghur

discontent in Xinjiang, the other being the politicization of Islam.

The Hans head region government and bring with them the Mandarin language skills and

contacts that help them prosper economically. They also bring a condescension toward

the Uyghur culture and discrimination against the Uyghurs in hiring practices

exemplified by the following remarks made by "Boss Wang," an overseer of a

construction site: "Uighurs are lazy…they're usually not bad people, but they think it's

easier to steal money than to work for it."[37] This said at a time when Uyghur

unemployment is high even among young people with degrees.

It is not surprising that many reports indicate tension is high between the two cultures and

that Uyghurs feel like second class citizens in their own land. Condescension, arrogance

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[36] Stanley W. Toops, "The Demography of Xinjiang," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 245.
[37] Forney, "One Nation—Divided: Since Sept. 11, Beijing has been cracking down in Xinjiang. Decades of repression have already made native Uighurs strangers in their own land," op. cit.

and lack of cross-cultural understanding are bound to stand in the way of government efforts to strengthen national unity and assimilation. Unfortunately, the Uyghurs do not have the power to change the situation. One can only hope they are not driven into the arms of radical Islamists, precisely what Beijing is trying to avoid. Suicide bombers sadly come to mind.

Accelerated promotion of assimilation. Steps toward assimilating Xinjiang's ethnic minority groups into the dominant Han culture have been accelerated. They cover broader mandated use of the Chinese language in the school system, special educational programs that foster national unity, and broad-reaching messages in the schools and local media promoting national unity. The remainder of this section describes these measures from a communications perspective and analyzes the impact and reaction of the Uyghurs.

Language. Uyghur is a Turkic language and is the mother tongue of the Uyghur people living in Xinjiang. While Mandarin (or Putonghua) is the official language of China, the majority of Uyghurs do not speak it. However, the increasing number of Han Chinese now living in the region are putting language pressure on the ethnic minorities as Mandarin becomes more pervasive, especially in business and other forms of economic and social development. Also, this language barrier, especially in rural areas, is considered a major obstacle in maintaining security or Chinese control over Xinjiang.[38] Dillon reports that a major priority of the government is to "[r]ais[e] the level of Chinese

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[38] Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang-China's Muslim Far Northwest* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 26; quoting Wang Lequan, Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary.

among non-Han people in Xinjiang so that they can be integrated into Chinese society."[39]

Language in the schools. Evidence of this trend toward "Chinese spoken here" is seen in the schools. Until recently, Article 37 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy gave minority students the right to receive instruction and use textbooks in their own language. In compliance with this law, there have been two types of schools in Xinjiang: Chinese-language schools and ethnic language-schools, many of which provided instruction in the Uyghur language. Educational materials including textbooks were also available in Uyghur but were mainly direct translations from Chinese-language materials used throughout China.[40] Even though courses in Chinese as a second language were required from the third grade upwards, instruction for all courses was delivered in Uyghur. The curriculum was the same in both systems, but the Uyghur-language schools included more Uyghur culture, music and dance than the Chinese-language schools.[41] At the tertiary level, Xinjiang University also offered its curriculum in the Uyghur language.

While the Chinese government has not officially announced plans to abolish Article 37, more stringent requirements to study the Chinese language in school and take instruction in the Chinese language are now being established in the Xinjiang school system. Whereas Chinese was taught as a second language from the third grade upwards, after the mid-1990s, Chinese became the language of instruction from the third grade upwards. A

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Linda Benson, "Education and Social Mobility Among Minority Populations," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 198.
[41] Mackerras, "Ethnicity in China: the Case in Xinjiang," op. cit., 11.

new change imposed in 2004 now requires instruction in Chinese from the first grade

upwards, not only instruction in how to speak the language but overall course instruction

as well.[42] In seeming support of these educational changes, Dwyer reports that little

effort has been made to improve the quality of minority language instruction and

instructional materials.[43]

There is no longer a sharp distinction between the Chinese-language and ethnic-language

schools now that all instruction must be carried out in Chinese. As a result, the Education

Commission in Xinjiang has begun combining schools as announced in the following

article taken from the *Xinjiang Daily*, March 2004:

> "The Chinese Communist Party and regional government have decided that ethnic
> minority schools must be merged with ethnic Chinese schools and ethnic minority
> students must be mixed with ethnic Chinese students. Teaching should be conducted
> in Chinese language as much as possible… Some small towns and counties, where
> conditions are ripe, must start teaching Chinese to first-grade ethnic minority students
> in primary school (*Radio Free Asia*, 2004)."[44]

Justification for merging the schools is to "streamline and modernize education in the

region and …include opportunities for Uyghurs and other minorities to learn English."[45]

The reaction from Uyghur parents is not surprising because Uyghurs strongly identify

with their language and their religion. Many think that the government is systematically

forcing their language into extinction. Quoting a frustrated young mother of a second-

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[42] Arienne M. Dwyer, "The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse,"
Policy Studies 15, East-West Center Washington (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2005), 37 (accessed
June 15, 2005); available from http://www.eastwestcenterwashington.org/Publications/psseriespdf15.htm.
[43] Ibid., 35.
[44] Ibid., 38. Taken from "China Imposes Chinese Language on Uyghur Schools," *Radio Free Asia*, March
16, 2004 (accessed June 25, 2005); available from
http://www.rfa.org/English/news/social/2004/03/16/130822/.
[45] "China Imposes Chinese Language on Uyghur Schools," op. cit.

grader, "We will teach our children our language no matter what it takes."[46]

At the university level, in 2002, Professors at Xinjiang University had to stop teaching their courses in Uyghur and switch to Mandarin, whether they were fluent in Mandarin or not. It was reported that many Uyghur teachers at the university were "embarrassing themselves" in front of their students because their Mandarin was so poor.[47] The Dean of the university justified this change by commenting, "…the change is needed to raise the level of education of local Uighur students who…often fall far behind their Han Chinese classmates." He further commented that there are few [university-level] textbooks translated into Uyhgur and that students who learn in Mandarin have a better chance of getting a job after graduation.[48]

While the Dean is no doubt toeing the party line, lack of Mandarin language skills is often cited as one of the reasons why otherwise qualified Uyghur citizens are bypassed in the local job market. The Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary, Wang Lequan, commented on the "language divide," observing that many Uyghurs do not speak Chinese. Without the language and job skills, he confirmed they are "effectively disqualified from official jobs and it makes it harder for them to find employment in

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[46] Robert Marquand, "Pressure to Conform in West China," *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 29, 2003. Accessed August 10, 2004. Available from http://www.uyghuramerican.org/christian_science_monitor.htm.

[47] Matthew Forney, "One Nation—Divided: Since Sept. 11, Beijing has been cracking down on Xinjiang. Decades of repression have already made native Uighur strangers in their own land." *Time International*, March 25, 2002, v159, i11, p38+ (accessed January 20, 2005); available from Infotrac Web: Expanded Academic ASAP.

[48] Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, "Language Blow for China's Muslims," *BBC News*, June 1, 2002 (accessed May 12, 2005); available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2020009.stm.

Chinese companies."[49] This situation is cited enough in the literature to believe there is some truth to it in spite of Uyghur claims of job discrimination.

In sum, in spite of a national law preserving the right of ethnic minority students to attend school and receive instruction and learning materials in their own language, this law has been unofficially reversed in Xinjiang. Minority-language instruction has ended, Chinese-language instruction is now required, and minority and Chinese-language schools are merging. One can infer from the timing of these changes that there could be two reasons why the PRC would reverse Article 37 of the National Law in Xinjiang:

1. Facility in the Chinese language would make it easier for Uyghurs to participate in and take advantage of the economic development that is underway in Xinjiang. The ability to fully communicate in the Chinese language is considered essential to economic and social development. Uyghurs are facing job discrimination partly because of their inability to communicate with Han hiring managers. They are protected by ethnic quotas for government jobs, but greater job growth is occurring in the private sector and this area is dominated by Mandarin-speaking Chinese.

2. Facility in the Chinese language and studying closely with Chinese students will accelerate the assimilation of Uyghur students into the dominant Han Chinese culture. For example, observers have reported that minority students who study in the Chinese-language schools "tend to speak, dress, and act like Chinese students, which was both a

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[49] Louisa Lim, "China's Uighurs lose out to development," *BBC News*, December 19, 2003 (accessed May 12, 2005); available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/3330803.stm.

source of prestige (vis-à-vis Han society) and embarrassment (vis-à-vis local ethnic identity, especially when their Uyghur skills slipped)."[50] Dwyer quotes another scholar's research in this area: "The schools were widely recognized as the greatest integrating force, and the overwhelming conversion of Uyghur children to Han culture was resented."[51] From the government's perspective, rapid assimilation of young Uyghurs would greatly reduce the separatist threat in Xinjiang because they are mostly the young people who *actively* carry the torch for independence.

Language use in society. Rural Xinjiang tends to be monolingual Uyghur. However, urban areas are bilingual with "street names, many shop signs and official leaflets and posters printed in both Uyghur and Chinese."[52] With the unofficial push to assimilation, however, this may be changing. Alim A. Seytoff, President of the Uyghur American Association, recently addressed the US Commission on International Religious Freedom and spoke of many of the grievances that Uyghurs claim under Chinese rule. Among them, he said that Uyghur is no longer the official language of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, that government documents are written specifically in Chinese without translation into Uyghur, and street signs have been converted from Uyghur to Chinese.[53] Consistent with Seytoff's sentiment, Dwyer reports the "sinicization" of the Uyghur language where Chinese words are being introduced into the language to replace

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[50] Dwyer, op. cit., 38.
[51] Ibid, quoting Nathan Light.
[52] Dillon, op. cit., 27.
[53] Alim A. Seytoff, President of the Uyghur American Association, "UAA Speech at USCIRF [US Commission on International Religious Freedom] Round-table Panel Discussion." Unfortunately, no date was given for this event. (accessed September 2, 2004); available from http://www.uyghuramerican.org/feature/uaa_speech_at_uscirf_round.htm. Checking on May 30, 2005, to determine if an event date was provided in any related material, I discovered that this file has been removed from the Uyghur American website. However, I have a paper copy of the speech if anyone wishes to see it.

Turkic-based words that are more cumbersome or have a Russian influence, or to provide

meaning in the absence of a Uyghur term.

Computing in Uyghur. On a different note but language-related, younger Uyghurs are

avidly taking up the Internet like their counterparts worldwide. Internet cafés have

sprung up in the Xinjiang region and have been spotted in Urumqi, Kashgar, Ili, Keriya,

Korla, and Hami. According to Dwyer, in Xinjiang the cafés tend to be segregated by

ethnicity (some for Hans, some for Uyghurs, and still others for foreigners).[54] As in the

rest of China, use of the cafés is strictly monitored and a number of websites are blocked.

However, the government has not mandated Chinese-language use of the Internet. Thus,

Uyghur interest in using their language on the Internet has inspired the adaptation of a

Latin-based script to transliterate Uyghur. The script is easily used with ASCII

keyboards and does not need special computer programs or fonts to scan, type or

structure Latin-script Uyghur data. The script has been named *Uyghur kompyuter yeziqi*

or *Uyghur Internet yeziqi* ("Uyghur computer or Internet orthography").[55] Formal

websites targeting the Uyghurs, however, present the Uyghur language in the traditional

Persian-Arabic script such as the RFA website at http://www.rfa.org/uyghur/. This is the

script used for Uyghur-language books and newspapers, street and shop names.[56]

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[54] Dwyer, op. cit., 23.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Dillon, op. cit., 27.

Mobile phones also have a Uyghur interface. Beijing Capitel, in cooperation with

Xinjiang Mobile, introduced a Uyghur-language mobile phone in January 2004.[57] Menus

can alternate between Uyghur, Chinese and English. The phone can also be used to send

and receive short text messages in Uyghur. These developments lead one to conclude

that there is an active and robust information technology market supporting the Uyghurs.

A final word on language. Uyghur groups have condemned the new language

requirement in the schools and the greater visibility of the Mandarin language as a "direct

attack" on their culture and identity.[58] For both rural and urban Uyghurs, ethnic identity

is linked with linguistic and religious identity. Frankly, from my research, I would say

one of the greatest barriers keeping the Uyghurs behind in their own land is a lack of

education and the inability to speak Mandarin. The Chinese are not going to go away and

the political structure is set up so that the Chinese are in charge (in spite of the word

"autonomous" in the name of the region). The Uyghurs would only be helping

themselves by becoming better able to communicate in the national language of China.

Education. As previously discussed, the Chinese government uses its educational

system as a mechanism for indoctrinating young minority children with messages of

assimilation and national unity. While this is not a new strategy, efforts have accelerated

in recent years to drive these messages home. The primary goal of the CCP's educational

policy for minority groups has traditionally been to "integrate all ethnic groups into a

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[57] "China unveils mobile phone for Uighurs," *Beijing Portal*, January 30, 2004 (accessed June 20, 2005); available from http://www.beijingportal.com.cn/7838/2004/01/30/1380@1850550.htm.
[58] Wingfield-Hayes, op. cit.

single and unified socialist state."[59] The purpose is to develop a national unity and create

a "sense of loyalty" among minority peoples.[60] Dru Gladney puts it more bluntly: the

"overwhelming thrust of the state's policy is to teach a centralized curriculum dominated

by Han history and language…ensur[ing] that Uyghur children enter into the Chinese

world…participat[ing] formally in the Chinese nation state."[61]

Education in China is compulsory to the ninth grade: six years of primary school and

three years of middle school. There have been, however, obstacles in the form of exams

and fees that have kept many children, especially poor ones, from progressing beyond a

primary education. In spite of the national policy for compulsory education, illiteracy for

Uyghurs in 1990 stood at 26%.[62] Even though a small percentage of Uyghurs graduate

from college or university, in 1990 the average amount of schooling for Uyghurs was

5.43 years,[63] reflective perhaps of the challenges students faced if they wished to progress

into middle and high school. This lack of schooling must underlie Xinjiang Communist

Party Secretary Wang Lequan's comments that "Uighurs simply do not have the skills for

jobs like [those in Xinjiang's oil industry]"[64] (jobs which draw higher skilled Hans into

the region). Continuing, he said, "One common problem of the western region is that the

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[59] Linda Benson, "Education and Social Mobility among Minority Populations in Xinjiang," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 190.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Dru Gladney, "The Chinese Program of Development and Control, 1978-2001," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 114.
[62] Benson, op. cit., 199.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Louisa Lim, "China's Uyghurs lose out to development," *BBC News*, December 19, 2003 (accessed May 12, 2005); available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/3330803.stm.

education and cultural level of the people here is quite low…in Xinjiang, we lack the talent needed for modernization and advanced industry."[65]

Nicholas Becquelin from Human Rights in China noted that the plans for the enormously funded "Develop the West" campaign do not include serious poverty alleviation efforts, rural development or empowerment of minority peoples,[66] programs that could be helpful to ensuring more children stay in school. However, beginning with the school year 2003-2004, China began subsidizing education for an estimated 1.73 million needy school children in the elementary and middle school grades in southern Xinjiang, an area heavily populated by Uyghurs. A new financial-aid plan is expected to allocate 190 million yuan (US $22.8 million) annually to cover tuition, fees, textbooks and other teaching materials for these young scholars.[67] The purpose of the program is to keep children in school when they would otherwise have been forced to leave because of financial issues.

The Chinese educational system conducts preferential programs for top minority students in Xinjiang to study in schools in eastern China. One program sends 3,115 students to high schools in eastern Chinese provinces. Another program provides four-year classes composed exclusively of minority students within institutes of higher learning in provinces where Han Chinese are the majority. More than 700 students from Xinjiang have graduated from minority classes at Dalian University, for example, since 1990. The Chinese government commends these programs as a way to improve minority

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] "Xinjiang's Poor School Students to Enjoy Free Education," *Xinhua News Agency*, July 8, 2003 (accessed June 15, 2005); available from http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/69234.htm.

educational levels but there is no question that the minority participants are immersed in Han Chinese culture and presumably come away better integrated with Chinese society (and probably fluent in the Chinese language). Many Uyghurs view these programs as attempts to assimilate the minorities.[68]

Each respective autonomous region has the right to establish the curriculum for its own minority schools, but the trend leans toward standardization with regular Han schools across the country. In attempts to "purify" educational materials, a clean-up effort was begun in 2001 to remove "separatist content" and anything related to religious ideas from textbooks and libraries. As a result, social studies classes at the middle school level do not contain material covering the periods of Uyghur independence prior to 1949. According to a social studies teacher who is also Uyghur, "a student asking about this period would be considered a separatist."[69]

Courses on politics are required of all students, both Han and ethnic minority. In addition, the Chinese government's approved history of the XUAR stresses the historical links between Xinjiang and China and is required study of all students. In the 1990s, minority students at the college and university level were required to read the approved Xinjiang history and pass an examination on its contents. While Uyghur students might question the history's veracity, they could not graduate without passing the exam.[70] It is presumed that this requirement still exists today because separatism is still an issue.

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[68] Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "Xinjiang Government Announces 2005 Admission Standards for Middle and High Schools," *CECC Virtual Academy*, April 21, 2005 (accessed June 15, 2005); available from http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=11330.
[69] Marquand, op. cit.
[70] Benson, op. cit., 198.

Many Uyghurs still espouse their own version of the region's history where they are the original owners of a land usurped by the Chinese.

A special educational program promoting national unity is included in all Xinjiang school districts each May, a program originally established in 1983. Usually a single day is designated as National Unity Education Day,[71] but in 1997, during a time of much separatist violence in Xinjiang, May was designated Nationality Unity Education Month. To accompany this special program and to be used as a key text, the Xinjiang CCP Propaganda Department compiled and published a *Reader on Nationality Unity Education* in the Uyghur, Kazakh and Han Chinese languages.[72] The US Embassy's website in China provides a summary of this reader as well as a summary of a companion edition entitled *Preserve the Unity of the Motherland (Nationalities Solidarity Education Book)* which was published in 1996. Both textbooks warn students of Xinjiang's two greatest threats: "splittists" and illegal religious activities. The first book also includes a discussion of the Marxist theory of nationalities as well as essays on national unity by Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. The second book provides mostly counterarguments to separatism.[73] A summary of the themes discussed in the second book is found in Appendix B of this document, taken directly from the US Embassy website in Beijing.

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[71] "China: New relations among Xinjiang ethnic groups developing," *Xinhua News Agency*, Beijing, in English, September 9, 1999 (accessed June 16, 2005); available from http://www.phil-fak-uni-duesseldorf.de/oasien/china/service/bbc/990909.htm.
[72] Dillon, op. cit., 103.
[73] Embassy of the United States of America in China, "Xinjiang Reading Notes: Population, Economy, Environment, Minorities Policy" (accessed September 24, 2004); available from http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/sandt/xjnotes.htm.

Another way of fostering assimilation has been to encourage Uyghur and Han children to study together in the same school and in the same classrooms. This plan was carried out in Korla with Middle School No. 1 where 730 Uyghurs mixed with 1800 Han children. The Uyghur students were encouraged to study in Chinese if they wished, but only about 75 did.[74] Since this program was reported in 2003, before the requirement for school mergers was announced in 2004, it may have been a testing ground for the new rule. However, an interesting aspect to this program is the communications element. Administrators placed posters on the walls to deliver messages of national unity and atheism, clearly targeting the Uyghur students. In particular, messages defining the two "musts" were visibly displayed:

1. "We must fight separatism."
2. "We must believe in Marxist atheism and not attend religious activities."[75]

Paintings on walls in the school hallways also delivered messages consistent with CCP values. Paintings were seen of Chinese poets, a Uyghur Communist hero (Abdul Halik Regur) who fought the Kuomintang, and interestingly, a picture of Albert Einstein. These images represent multiple messages important to the CCP for assimilation: pride in national Chinese culture and pride in a Uyghur Communist hero who clearly represents the antithesis of Uyghur separatism. Einstein's image is more subtle. Einstein is a universal symbol of genius and study of the sciences, which the Chinese government promotes along with the study of the Chinese language. According to the CCP, studying the sciences is far preferable to attending mosque or other religious-oriented activities.[76]

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[74] Marquand, op. cit.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Benson, op. cit., 211.

The Chinese educational system is also using newer technologies to further assimilate ethnic minorities in the western region. One such example is an e-learning project sponsored by the Middle School Attached to Beijing University. The school produced an online education program that has reached both Tibet and the Altay Uygur prefecture in Xinjiang via the Internet over satellite communications. The program includes films that will help rural students share resources with their city counterparts.[77] The programming, however, is one-way: information is "pulled down" by the west and nothing is "pushed back" to the east. This is not interactive use of the Internet; it is simply an exposure to Chinese educational resources. It inhibits a cross-cultural experience for the middle school students and no doubt forces those students on the receiving end to understand the programs in Mandarin, not their own ethnic language.

While the Chinese government invests in ways to expose Uyghurs and other minorities to Han cultural achievements, certain books highlighting Uyghur literature and the Uyghur version of their history have been banned. In 2002, Chinese officials staged a public burning of books written by Uyghur historian Turghun Almas and other Uyghur nationalists. While clearly the purpose was to destroy any literature that might incite separatism, another purpose may have been to keep these works from entering the educational system.

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[77] "Qualified Education Reaches NW. China's Border Area via Internet," *People's Daily*, August 5, 2003 (accessed May 25, 2004); available from http://www.chinawest.gov.cn/english/asp/showinfo.asp?name=200308050004.

The overall trend in Xinjiang's educational system is to assimilate the Uyghurs, with attempts to establish stronger levels of Chinese national unity via targeted messaging to the children. In spite of China's ethnic minority policy of freedom of cultural expression, Uyghurs argue that government policy, however covert, downplays their history and traditional culture. They will continue to counteract this policy by teaching their culture and language to their children at home. In the long run, this may be the best way of sustaining Uyghur traditions and language as Chinese efforts to force assimilation intensify.

Media. Mass media is an obvious way for the Chinese government to disseminate its political messages, using its propaganda machine to inspire national unity. The intent, of course, is to bring the ethnic minorities into the national order through exhortation, "correct thought," and assimilation.

We know from past observations that Communist states do not stint on capital investment in the production of words, and great importance is attached to the "exhortation of adults."[78] As evidence, print media blossomed in Xinjiang after the Communist take-over in 1949: the number of newspapers increased from 4 in 1952 to 98 in 2001, with 43 of them published in local ethnic-minority languages.[79] Investment in public broadcasting media has not been limited, either: the Information Office of the State

[78] Ithiel de Sola Pool, "The Mass Media and Politics in the Modernization Process," in *Communications and Political Development*, ed. Lucian W. Pye (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 235.
[79] Information Office of the State Council (People's Republic of China), *White Paper on the History and Development of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region* (Part VI. "Progress in Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Health Work"), May 26, 2003 (accessed November 6, 2004); available from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-05/26/content_887295.htm.

Council proudly claims that radio reaches 91.3% of Xinjiang's population and television reaches 90.93%,[80] relatively high numbers for such a huge remote territory.

Government efforts to improve this coverage are illustrated by the state-funded "Tibet-Xinjiang Project" launched in 2002 to bring full radio and television networking coverage to all villages in Xinjiang and presumably Tibet. Li Changchun, a senior CCP party official, commented on the project in January 2004 as follows,

> "the project is of strategic importance and the quality of the programs should be further improved and diversified according to different customs, languages, social history, economic and political situations of different minority groups."[81]

Li then called on the people of Xinjiang to

> "devote more efforts to form…a sound social atmosphere, which values unification, cherished [sic] security and stability of the border areas, and promoted [sic] harmonious development between the economy and society."[82]

The message of national unity is clearly a CCP party message and it makes sense that the Chinese government would want this message broadcast into every ethnic minority household in Xinjiang. But I find it intriguing that Li also encouraged programming that catered to the customs and languages of different minority groups. This message is consistent with the spirit of the National Minorities Policy, delivered at a time when it appears that the unofficial national policy is to promote assimilation. However, it could also be a ploy to gain legitimacy for the government in this restive region.

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[80] Ibid.
[81] "Senior Chinese Leader Calls to Expand Radio, TV Coverage in Western Areas," *Tibetinfo*, January 13, 2004 (accessed May 25, 2004); available from
http:/www.chinawest.gov.cn/english/asp/showinfo.asp?name=200401130002.
[82] Ibid.

Dwyer discovered in her recent language research in Xinjiang that language policy for the media has caused a decline in the use of the Uyghur language in the media.[83] If this is true, then perhaps the ploy for legitimacy mentioned above is a more accurate reflection of Li's comments than accommodation of the National Minorities Policy.

Radio and television. According to Dwyer, radio and television broadcasts in minority languages were at their peak in the early 1990s and have steadily decreased since then.[84] Xinjiang TV and Xinjiang Broadcasting (for radio) at one time broadcast solely in the Uyghur language. However, beginning in 1999, their programming converted to multi-lingual broadcasts (Uyghur, Mandarin and Kazakh) and Uyghur-language programming dropped to eight hours a day. Local TV stations such as Xinjiang Economic TV, Urumqi TV and Karamay TV, broadcast in Mandarin, only.[85] They possibly cater to the growing Han Chinese population living in Xinjiang.

Newspapers. According to the Information Office of the State Council, 43 newspapers in Xinjiang are published in local ethnic-minority languages. China's national newspaper (*The People's Daily*) and the regional (*Xinjiang Daily*) are translated into Uyghur from the original Chinese editions.[86] *The People's Daily* presents the official government slant on the news and likely the same is true of the *Xinjiang Daily* given its regional status. According to Dwyer, most newspapers printed in Uyghur are translations from the original Chinese. They presumably retain whatever government bias is present,

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[83] Dwyer, op. cit, 48.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 49.
[86] Ibid., 48.

especially messages calling for national unity or assimilation. Local newspapers, on the other hand, provide far more detailed information on local problems including details of government repression than the more "tightly censored nationals."[87] While this information was not forthcoming, it is likely that these local newspapers are printed in the local ethnic language of the community (Uyghur for the *Kashgar Daily*, perhaps) and are not translations from Mandarin. These local newspapers would be in the minority of the papers available in the region.

Non-scholastic print. We have seen that with television, radio and most newspapers, the trend is toward increasing the presence of Mandarin (and by association, the Chinese influence) and reducing the presence of minority languages. This is a clear course toward assimilation. However, in the area of non-scholastic print media, China seems to be following its National Minorities Policy of fostering ethnic minority languages and culture, albeit in a highly monitored fashion. Since the 1980s, the government has supported publishing houses both in Xinjiang and Beijing to widely disseminate Uyghur literature. As a result, numerous types of Uyghur literature have become available in the Uyghur language: edited volumes of various literary genres such as humorous stories, ballads and prose poems; "quasi-academic" journals such as *Tarim* and *Bulaq*; and works of cultural import such as a modern Uyghur translation of the 11th century Turkic dictionary, the *Divan lugat at-turk*, compiled by Mahmud al-Kashgari, and a Uyghur-language version of the *Qur'an*.[88]

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[87] Dillon, op. cit., 82-83.
[88] Dwyer, op. cit., 47.

According to Dwyer, available publications that support minority-languages are widely distributed and target a variety of interests as well as addressing a broad age-range of readers. Most recent book-length publications are being written in Uyghur or other minority language, and are not translated from Mandarin as is done in the news media.[89]

China is not revealing why it is allowing this form of cultural medium to flourish while all other media are sliding toward assimilation. However, it is a way of ameliorating Uyghur discontent in an effort to capture Uyghur "hearts and minds" and perhaps soften the impact of government restrictions in other areas. The mechanisms are already in place to rigorously censor Uyghur literature and publish what the government deems acceptable. This activity also gives the government an opportunity to claim adherence to its National Minority Policy. A potential geopolitical motive has to do with China's desire to maintain friendly relations with the oil-producing countries of the Middle East. China is on a world-wide mission to expand its energy sources in order to ensure there is enough oil and gas to fuel its burgeoning economy. Therefore, it cannot afford to offend the Muslim Middle Eastern countries that represent an important source of oil.[90] Permitting Uyghur publications of works that represent the culture to a broad Uyghur audience is a way for China to highlight how well it treats its Muslim citizens.

Internet as a cultural medium. Lastly, China has started to use the Internet as a medium to transmit cultural programs from eastern China to the western regions via a newly implemented national information-sharing network. The network will electronically

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[89] Ibid., 45.
[90] A similar theory was posited by Dru C. Gladney in "Cyber-Separatism and Uyghur Ethnic Nationalism in China," op. cit.

make available those cultural resources found in libraries, museums, art galleries and research institutes located in eastern China (resources no doubt central to the Han culture). The network is scheduled for completion in 2005.

According to the Minister of Culture, Sun Jiazheng,

> "the project will play an important role in improving the present situation in the vast central western China, where the level of economic and cultural development and information exchange lags far behind coastal areas in the east."[91]

Given that the network seems to provide a one-way exchange of cultural information (from east to west) and given the condescending tone toward "cultural development" among the western people, it is likely that this network is another assimilative tool deployed by the government.

Regardless of the form of communication, China is clearly on a path to assimilate its ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. We have examined and analyzed language use, educational programs and the media. With one exception (non-scholastic print), the opportunities for the Uyghur language and culture to flourish via public means are diminishing. With restrictions placed on their worship of Islam combined with the overwhelming presence of in-migrating Han Chinese (the source of growing tension between the Uyghurs and the Hans), it is easy to see why outside observers are claiming that the Uyghurs are feeling like "strangers in their own land."[92]

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[91] Office of the Leading Group for Western Region Development of the State Council, *Network Being Set up for Better Sharing of Cultural Information in China* (accessed May 25, 2004); available from www.chinawest.gov.cn/english/asp/showinfo.asp?name=200204220001.

[92] Ron Gluckman, "Strangers in their own Land," *Time's Asiaweek*, 2001 (accessed August 10, 2004); available from the Uyghur Information Agency at http://www.uyghurinfo.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=338.

With ethnic tensions simmering below the surface (inferred from so many accounts of Uyghur discontent with the Chinese regime), the question scholars are asking is whether the Uyghurs will quietly assimilate, explode into ever greater violence, or react in some other unforeseen way. Let us look at another option for them.

Chapter 4: Economic Development and Information Technologies

"Develop the West" campaign. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Chinese government often stated their belief that improving the Uyghur standard of living would mitigate the Uyghurs' desire for independence. Jiang Zemin, the recent outgoing President of the PRC, stated in June 2000 while touring northwest China,

> "…the significance of the western development should be viewed from the necessity of meeting the strategic goal of socialist modernization, safeguarding national unity and stability, and achieving step by step the goal of socialist prosperity and the revitalization of the Chinese people."[93]

Jiang clearly asserts that China's massive "Develop the West" campaign is designed to economically develop China's western region. Reading between the lines, the economic opportunity made available by the western development program would benefit the people living in the west (we can assume this includes ethnic minorities) and make them happier with PRC rule, thus "safeguarding national unity and stability." The benefits of the program would legitimize the government in the eyes of the western people. It is not until the mid-2000s that we discover that the benefits target the Hans in the west and the ethnic minorities are being marginalized.

The strategy for the "Develop the West" campaign actually began in the 1990s and projects were undertaken that would develop infrastructure in western China and investigate how best to exploit the rich oil and gas reserves in the west (much of it under the Tarim Basin) to satisfy energy-hungry eastern China. The campaign was formally incorporated into the Chinese Communist Party's Tenth Five-Year Economic Plan (2001-

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[93] "Jiang on Party Building, Western Development," *Xinhua News Agency*, June 21, 2000. Accessed May 21, 2004. Available from Expanded Academic ASAP (electronic database).

2005). Some of the accomplishments achieved in the Xinjiang Region since the

inception of the "Develop the West" campaign are the following:

- Completion of the west to east natural gas pipeline stretching 4,200 km from Lunnan in

  the Tarim Basin to Shanghai.[94]

- Completion of 3000 km of railway lines available for passenger traffic including the

  extension from Korla to Kashgar;[95] plans for development of an international railway

  connecting China with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.[96]

- Completion of 32,300 km of new highways[97] including a north-south highway through

  the Tarim Basin;[98] still underway or in-plan are the development of an expressway in

  southern Xinjiang and the development of 4,000 km of highways in rural areas.[99]

- Electricity extended to 93% of townships and small towns.

- Telecommunications infrastructure in the form of high-speed cables linking points

  within the region and linking the region with other parts of China; capacity provided

  for 1 million people to make domestic and long distance calls simultaneously.[100]

  28,000 km of fibre optic cable have been pulled within the Xinjiang Region forming

  the backbone of the telecommunications infrastructure, with digital microwave and

  satellite available as support. All regions, prefectures, cities and counties in Xinjiang

  have access to the long-distance telephone network. Wireless networking for mobile

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[94] "Natural gas pipeline to start commercial run," cited from www.chinaview.cn, December 28, 2004
(accessed March 23, 2005); available from http://www.dahew.com/ww/2004-12/28/content_105470.htm.
[95] "Infrastructure Construction" under "Economy of Xinjiang" on *Urumqi Fair Website* (accessed March
19, 2005); available from http://www.urumqifair.com/en/information/xj_economy/xj_jjxz/jcss_a.htm.
[96] "Xinjiang Reports Progress in Infrastructure Construction," *People's Daily*, March 31, 2003 (accessed
June 2, 2004); available from
http://www.chinawest.gov.cn/english/asp/showinfo.asp?name=200303310002.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Nicolas Becquelin, "Staged Development in Xinjiang," *The China Quarterly* no. 178 (June 2004), 360.
[99] "Xinjiang Reports Progress in Infrastructure Construction,"op. cit.
[100] Ibid.

telephones covers developed townships and cities at the county level or higher.[101]

- Telephone density rose to 25.3 fixed-line phones and 24.3 mobile phones per 100 people. 85,000 new Internet users came online in the first half of 2004.[102]

- Digital data networks have also been installed and are purported to support video-conferencing and multi-media telecommunications; a broadband digital network is under development; Internet access and a "public multi-media communication network" are available "to society."[103]

The Chinese government allocates billions of yuan (translating to billions of US dollars) annually to support these projects with over US $25 billion allocated annually to telecommunications infrastructure, alone.[104] The facts and figures cited above indicate that much work has been done to build basic infrastructure and provide telephone service in cities and towns, but it is not clear how much "last mile" wiring has been installed to deliver telephone connections directly to homes in each community. Per these statistics, about one quarter of the population has access to a fixed-line telephone and another one quarter of the population has access to a mobile phone. Out of a population of 18.5 million people, this means that phone access is available to about 9.25 million people (assuming little overlap between fixed-line phones and mobile phones) and still leaves roughly 9.25 million people without phone service. It is reasonably safe to assume that most of those people without phone service live in rural areas. The CPC's Eleventh Five-

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[101] "Infrastructure Construction" under "Economy of Xinjiang" on *Urumqi Fair Website,* op. cit.
[102] "China's Xinjiang Posts 45.6% Jump in New Internet Users," *Asia Pulse Pte Ltd*, August 17, 2004 (accessed March 10, 2005); available from LexisNexis Academic.
[103] "Infrastructure Construction" under "Economy of Xinjiang" on *Urumqi Fair Website,* op. cit.
[104] Kaiser Kuo, "Narrowing China's Digital Divide,"*Asia Inc*., May 2004 (accessed May 20, 2004); available from ISI Emerging Markets (electronic database).

Year Economic Plan to cover 2006-2010 will be published within the next year, and it will be interesting to see if and how it addresses the penetration of telecommunications services into rural areas.

With all this activity booming in Xinjiang and billions of dollars US invested annually, the question arises: who is taking advantage of all this opportunity? Though not officially stated anywhere, there is enough anecdotal evidence to indicate that a sizable portion of the building contracts are going to Han Chinese companies and the labor jobs are being given to the Han Chinese workers who have either in-migrated over the years or who are "drifters," coming to Xinjiang only to seek work. Uyghur laborers are passed over. Per commentary in numerous articles, Uyghurs claim blatant discrimination in the winning of project bids and in the hiring of workers. The situation has intensified the unfriendly relations between the Uyghurs and the Han Chinese in Xinjiang.

If the Uyghurs are afforded little opportunity to participate in and take advantage of the economic improvements surging around them, and at the same time their cultural/ religious expression is being repressed by the government, then I suspect tensions will rise to the boiling point again. Tensions could potentially surface with the attitude of "what is there to lose?" if life is made so uncomfortable for them. The irony will be that plans originally designed to promote stability in the region will be exactly what motivates the next round of rebellion mounted by the Uyghurs.

These thoughts are supported by the words of Nicolas Becquelin, Research Director of

Human Rights in China (HRIC) located in Hong Kong and who specializes in the

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. In written discussion about the impact of the

"Develop the West" campaign on western China, Becquelin comments,

> "…the socio-economic development of ethnic minorities continues to fall behind
> on all indicators: southern Xinjiang (with a 95 per cent non-Han population) has
> an average per capita income half the provincial average [Xinjiang Statistical
> Yearbook 2002 cited]. In the more prosperous eastern Yili Kazakh Autonomous
> Prefecture, bordering Kazakhstan, 98 per cent of the officially [designated] "poor"
> population are non-Han. Rural under-employment is acute, accompanied by a
> diminution of the cultivable area per capita. Earlier surveys have showed that about
> one-third of the Uighur population is underemployed, and in certain districts, up to
> 45 per cent of the population registered have actually left to find work elsewhere
> [Jiang Liyun, citation translated into English as "The Uighur floating population of
> Xinjiang", *North-west Nationalities Studies*, No. 1 (1998), pp. 91-99]. If this
> pattern of rural migrations is not substantially different from the situation observed
> in the rest of China [Rachel Murphy, *How Migrant Labor is Changing China*
> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) cited], the problems Uyghurs face
> in finding jobs in the cities are incomparably higher, generating a growing urban
> underclass in the cities' suburbs. The campaign to Open Up the West, serving
> primarily as a vehicle for the interests of the state, gives no sign of altering this
> discriminative pattern."[105]

The Chinese government is at a juncture with two main options:

1. Continue as is: the Han population will increase through encouraged immigration and

eventually become the majority. The Hans will continue to take advantage of the

"Develop the West" investment and Uyghurs will be further marginalized with

resentment smoldering under the surface. This appears to be the current trend based on

literature written from first-hand observations and conversations with the Uyghurs (and

discussed earlier in this document). Or,

2. Recognize that the ethnic minorities are falling further behind economically, an

eventuality that will likely come back to haunt them in the form of future unrest. To

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[105] Becquelin, op. cit., 372.

lessen the probability of this potential danger, the government could identify poverty

alleviation projects that will benefit the Uyghurs directly. This would be an enormously

big step that the government would have to take on behalf of the Uyghurs – not an

accommodation that has been often extended in the past. However, should the Chinese

find it in their hearts to consider this approach, I would like to offer a solution.

Might there be a different way that the Uyghurs could take advantage of the opportunities

presented by the "Develop the West" campaign and not have to depend on the Han

Chinese for jobs? Rather than work directly for the Hans, develop a temporary parallel

economy in which the Uyghurs can succeed, improve their standard of living and

gradually integrate with the greater Xinjiang economy once their Chinese language and

maybe even English language skills improve and they can compete more effectively in

the overall economy than they can today. I am thinking of an economy based on

information services.

I propose a telecenter solution that directly targets poverty alleviation. The telecenter

would provide information services focused on the rural agricultural sector (targeting

Uyghur farmers specifically) and provide more general information to the local

population. This combined approach extends the reach of the telecenter to a broader

audience in each town and village, and therefore increases its value to the overall

community. Given current signs of an active and robust information technology mini-

industry supporting the Uyghurs, a technology-based solution customized for this ethnic

group may be very viable.

Telecenters. To quote the Development Gateway (a website focused on the use of

information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development available at

http://www.developmentgateway.org), telecenters are:

> "public access facilities in low income and rural areas [that] provide a broad range of …communication and information services, ranging from phone calls and email to multimedia distance learning and e-commerce."[106]

Use of the facilities may be free of charge, or low-rate fees may be applied. Telecenters

may be dedicated facilities, or share the premises of a public building such as a school,

library, or community center (whatever form that may take in a remote town or village).

Some telecenters have even been located in the home of a "model family" who has

agreed to teach other family members, relatives, friends and neighbors how to use it and

share the benefits with them.[107]

Telecenters are popular because they provide cost-effective, shared information services

in locations where people cannot afford their own PC, phone line or Internet

connection.[108] As the debate for Universal Service Access for Internet services is waged,

telecenters provide a way to make universal access a reality especially in remote poverty-

prone regions of the globe. Telecenters are viewed with promise in the developing world

because of the assumptions that "appropriate information can contribute significantly to

[economic] development; ICTs provide an important and potentially economical way for

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[106] Michael Jensen, "The Community Telecentre Cookbook for Africa: Recipes for Self-Sustainability," *Development Gateway* (accessed December 11, 2004); available from http://topics.developmentgateway.org/ict/sdm/previewDocument.do~activeDocumentId=448971.

[107] Paul Ulrich, *China's Rural Internet Information Centers: A Project to Reduce Poverty through Access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Rural Areas,* January 2003 (accessed October 15, 2004); available (as of November 16, 2004) from http://www.developmentgateway.org/node/13381/sdm/blob?pid=3483.

[108] Jensen, op. cit.

people to access that information; [and] telecentres are a viable way to link communities with…information and communication technologies."[109]

In spite of the promise of telecenters, they face challenges. Their value depends on the relevance of the information available through them. Many poor people are skeptical of the value of information as a resource, especially when food, clean water and health are their primary concerns. There is also concern that access be made available for the more marginalized members of a community such as women, the elderly, the disabled and the very poor. Literacy is generally viewed as a requirement for use of telecenter services, thus excluding those people including women who have little if any education. A Chinese information center pilot program got around this issue by making sure that the telecenters were staffed by someone who could help end users access and receive the information they requested, and helped them compose messages to subject matter experts (generally agriculturally-related advisers). Another issue has to do with the convenience of the telecenter location: when co-located with a government office building, access is difficult. However, if the telecenters are located in public community-oriented facilities such as schools or libraries in the local towns and villages, access is much easier, especially for women and children.

In addition to the issues cited above, the greatest issue concerning telecenters has to do with their sustainability. Before a telecenter can even be set up, there must be

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[109] Raul Roman and Royal D. Colle, "Themes and Issues in Telecentre Sustainability," *Development Informatics Working Paper Series* (University of Manchester, Manchester, UK: Institute for Development Policy and Management, January 2002) (accessed October 2004); available from http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/publications/wp/di/di_wp10.htm.

commitment on the part of the government and telecommunications service providers to support the installation with planning resources, funding, and reasonably priced access to telecommunications services. And there must be plans to sustain the telecenter for the long term not only with funding, but with staffing, ongoing outreach, and ongoing development of relevant material and programs.

Given the pros and cons of telecenters in general, and the general issues that must be resolved before implementation can begin, why does it make sense for the Chinese to develop telecenters for the Uyghurs in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region? Beginning in the 1980's, China has placed significant attention and resources in the development and application of ICTs. At that time, the government saw an enormous need to modernize and catch up to levels of science and technology competitive with the western industrialized countries. Chinese leaders began speaking of the need for the informatization of the country referring to the diffusion and integration of ICTs in all segments of society. These efforts led to the launching of the Informatization of the National Economy (INE) program in the late 1990's, the spirit of which was built into China's Tenth Five-Year Economic Plan (2001-2005).[110] The Plan makes informatization (ICT diffusion) of the national economy and society a strategic priority.

China suffers a digital divide in two dimensions: between the urban and rural sectors and between the eastern and western regions of the country. The Uyghurs, by residing in the rural sector of western China, are especially vulnerable to being on the disadvantaged

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[110] Xiudian Dai, "ICTs in China's development strategy," in *China and the Internet*, eds. Christopher R. Hughes and Gudrun Wacker (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 9-10.

side of the digital divide. By developing information centers for the Uyghurs, the

Chinese would not only be extending informatization to its western population, they

would also be joining worldwide efforts encouraged by the UN ICT Task Force

(established in April 2001 by Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations) to

harness information and communication technologies to help raise the world's poor out

of poverty.[111] These are lofty goals but they are consistent with China's own goals.

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[111] Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the UN, text of remarks published in "Launching Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Task Force, Secretary-General Appeals for Support from Private Sector," April, 2001 (accessed December 4, 2004); available from http://www.unicttaskforce.org/welcome/.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Two themes. In conclusion, two themes have emerged from the current situation in Xinjiang that I would like to expand upon here:

• Two different ethnic cultures in Xinjiang, the Hans and the Uyghurs, are on a potential collision course. Will their cultural differences lead to a struggle that could ultimately impede the modernization process set in motion by the Chinese government?

• Given China's policy on informatization, can bringing ICTs to the Uyghurs help avoid the cultural collision mentioned above?

What is putting the Hans and the Uyghurs on a collision course?

The Hans: The Han Chinese are the dominant culture in the People's Republic of China and their numbers are increasing in the Xinjiang Region, nearly catching up with the primary ethnic minority, the Uyghurs. The Hans have the power in China and run the national and regional governments. The main power position in Xinjiang is the XUAR Chinese Communist Party Secretary, who is always Han. Further, Hans direct the government's resources, monetary and other.

Throughout China including Xinjiang, the Hans are driving a vast modernization process. Within Xinjiang, they are driving pro-assimilation policies that include Mandarin-language instruction in the Xinjiang school system.

The Communist Hans are atheist and consider religion "feudal" and superstitious. "Feudal" is a pejorative term used to describe anything that is backward and/or inhibits

modernization goals. The Hans are viewed by the Uyghurs as not having respect for the

sanctity of holy places. Tourists, including women with their heads uncovered, blithely

enter the Idkah mosque in Kashgar, even during prayers, to have a look around oblivious

to the disrespectful behavior they are exhibiting to the Muslims. Yet the Muslims,

outraged and deeply offended, feel powerless to protest. The Hans tend to be arrogant

and condescending toward the ethnic minorities, and consider traditional cultures feudal

by their very being. These attitudes have exacerbated tensions between the two cultures.

Lastly, the Hans are benefiting economically from the "Develop the West" program.

They seem to get most of the contracts for program projects and Hans are the primary

group employed to implement these projects. The Hans, hard working and ambitious,

have every reason to be optimistic about their future in Xinjiang.

The Uyghurs: On the other hand, the Uyghurs have traditionally been the dominant

culture in Xinjiang with the greatest percentage of the population (about 75% in 1949

when the Chinese Communists took over Xinjiang). However, their numbers as a

percentage are decreasing as they are being overtaken by the Hans immigrating into the

region.

The Uyghurs do not have power. A Uyghur generally serves as the chairperson of the

region's People's Council, but the position is second to the CCP party secretary in

Xinjiang. In the past, Uyghurs have revolted to gain independence from China, but their

efforts were crushed. More recent rebellion occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

To stamp out Uyghur separatism, current government policy represses the Uyghur culture and controls their practice of Islam.

The Uyghur intellectuals want modernization and see the advantages of secular education. The peasants/farmers (the majority) want to maintain their traditional lifestyle, their language and their religion. They send their children to public schools, but they also want their children to receive a religious education in Islam. Most Uyghurs are against the pro-assimilation educational policy in the schools. They feel betrayed that the national ethnic minority policy that safeguards their language and culture is being cast aside by the government and replaced by policies designed to "destroy the Uyghur culture through 'Sinicization.'"[112]

The Uyghurs are not benefiting from the "Develop the West" campaign and modernization efforts. There are few, if any, poverty alleviation programs directed towards them aside from the financial aid given to children of poor families in southern Xinjiang that helps keep the children in school. Uyghur job seekers face discriminatory hiring practices in favor of the Hans. From all reports, there is a high rate of unemployment among the Uyghurs though I was not able to find an unemployment figure that was verifiable.[113] There is a high level of alcohol and drug abuse among the

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[112] "The Formation of the East Turkistan Government in Exile," *PR Newswire*, September 13, 2004 (accessed January 20, 2005); available from ISI Emerging Markets.

[113] According to Calla Wiemer in "The Economy of Xinjiang," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, Xinjiang's officially reported unemployment rate in 2000 was 3.8%, slightly exceeding the national figure of 3.1% (p. 180-181). The number is not broken down by ethnic group. Wiemer qualifies this number by explaining that China's reported unemployment rates pertain only to the officially registered unemployed. People who have been forced into early retirement or laid off with continued benefits are not counted among the unemployed. Also, people who are looking for work or wish to work but who are not formally registered as unemployed, are not counted in the statistic. Wiemer surmises that unemployment in Xinjiang

Uyghurs and a growing HIV/AIDS problem. I suspect these issues are related to feelings

of disenfranchisement and despair over their situation vis-à-vis the Chinese.

The Uyghurs are pessimistic about their future inferred by quotes provided by journalists

writing for the western press. Marquand quotes a Uyghur bread vendor whose shop is

near the famous Idkah Mosque in Kashgar, reflecting on the demolition of the ancient

neighborhood near the mosque that used to serve as a meeting place but has now been

replaced by a new plaza designed to attract tourists, "Look what they are doing to our

mosque! What more do I have to say about what is happening to us?"[114] Marquand

described this as a "typical local street feeling."[115]

However, some see hope through a unification of moderate Uyghur diaspora

organizations that came together in Germany in April 2004 under Erkin Alptekin. The

Uyghurs are hoping that Alptekin, the son of a pre-1949 president of independent

Xinjiang, can promote the Uyghur cause in the West, and serve as a "moderate, unifying

force for their nation."[116] Alptekin announced that the new organization would promote

the right of the Uyghurs to use "peaceful, nonviolent, and democratic means to determine

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is much higher than what is officially reported. An unemployment figure that may be closer to reality was presented in an "Open Letter to the EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs" (October 28, 2002), from Qiang Xiao, Executive Director of HRIC (Human Rights in China), and Sidiki Kaba, President of the FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights). The letter served as a briefing note to an upcoming EU/China dialog meeting scheduled for November 13, 2002. The briefing note gave the unemployment rate of Uyghurs in Xinjiang as 70% while the unemployment rate of Han Chinese in Xinjiang was less than 1%. Unfortunately, the source of this information was not provided. (accessed July 20, 2005; available from http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=391).

[114] Marquand, op. cit.

[115] Ibid.

[116] "The Great Leap west, China. (social conditions and economic development in Xinjiang province)," *The Economist*, August 28, 2004 v372 i8390 (accessed January 20, 2005); available from InfoTrac Web: Expanded Academic ASAP.

the political future of East Turkestan."[117]

Further, in September 2004, the East Turkistan Government in Exile was announced by its new Prime Minister, Anwar Yusuf Turani, who is also President of the East Turkistan National Freedom Center. The purpose of the government in exile is to speak on behalf of the Uyghurs still living in Xinjiang, raise world awareness of their "plight" at the hands of the Communist Chinese and gain support for their independence. It is not clear how this and Alptekin's organization are related. However, both wish to bring wider visibility to the Uyghur desire for an independent East Turkistan, which is today the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the PRC. Given China's strong hold on its territories and the example shown by the Tibetans of their unsuccessful attempts to free themselves of the Chinese, it is not optimistic that the Uyghurs will gain independence anytime soon.

Collision course. It is clear that there are numerous inequities in Xinjiang between the Hans and the Uyghurs. If the current drive for modernization continues in Xinjiang accompanied by current policies that repress the Uyghur culture and economic opportunities that continue to bypass the Uyghurs, the Uyghurs could revolt. A few potential activities the Uyghurs could pursue in their struggles for freedom are to engage in local separatist activity possibly supported by the Uyghur diaspora, invite radical Islam into Xinjiang to help support an insurgency against the Chinese government, sabotage the "Develop the West" and other modernization projects, or attack the Hans outright.

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[117] Susan V. Lawrence, "Why China Fears This Uyghur Exile," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Hong Kong, July 15, 2004 Vol. 167, Issue 28, p. 30-32 (accessed June 8, 2005); available from ProQuest.

If any of these activities were engaged, the Chinese government would respond with the zero-tolerance attitude exhibited toward separatist activity in the past. The Strike Hard campaign brought mass arrests, sentencing rallies and executions followed by strict control of Islam. Even now, the government is on the lookout for "spiritual terrorism" which, according to the Chinese, is the use of literary metaphor to destroy the unity between the Uyghur and the Han[118] and in my opinion, harkens back to the days of the "thought police." The draconian measures practiced by the Chinese government toward the Uyghurs has caught the attention of the international human rights organizations. Whatever the government does in reaction to potential separatist activity will be monitored internationally and censured if overly harsh.

Surely, if the Uyghurs revolt, the government will crush their efforts and quite possibly make life exceptionally more difficult for them. But, can the government afford a revolt on their hands? Managing and putting down the revolt would require government resources that could be used more productively for economic development. Instability in western China would discourage foreign investment in that area. Harsh treatment of the Uyghurs would be criticized by human rights organizations, possibly causing some economic repercussion such as worldwide boycotts of Chinese products. Lastly, harsh treatment of the Uyghurs could incur heavy criticism from the Muslim nations; energy resources could possibly be cut back or shut off. These are all prices that the CCP may be reluctant to pay. Strategically, avoiding a "collision" between the Uyghurs and the Hans would be to the government's best interests.

[118] Marquand, op. cit.

However, even if the Uyghur and Han cultures were to violently "collide," I do not believe the Chinese would allow the "collision" to halt the modernization process. It might slow modernization down because of resources diverted to managing the revolt, but it will not stop it. There is too much at stake for China.

China on the rise. China wants to gain what it thinks is its rightful position as a leader on the world stage. It still speaks of its humiliation by western "imperialists" and is working hard to overcome its position as a developing nation. Its economic policies and foreign trade have led to a booming economy, but the CCP is well aware that it still must get its internal "house" in order before it can truly present itself as a first-world, developed nation. As part of this "housekeeping" effort, great strides have been made in reducing poverty levels in China. For example, the number of poor with expenditures of less than US$1 a day declined from 368 million people in 1990 to 235 million in 1999.[119] However, much work still lies ahead addressing not only poverty but literacy, more equitable access to health care, and employment. Infrastructure projects are important, too, given that thirty million people, mostly in western China, still do not have access to electricity in their villages.[120] China must overcome formidable domestic challenges and maintain stability at the same time.

Therefore, the government wants to avoid an internal revolt and is taking what it thinks

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[119] World Bank Group, *Country Assistance Strategy of the World Bank Group for the People's Republic of China*, January 22, 2003, p. 8, Box 1.2 (accessed June 2005); available from http://www.worldbank.org.cn/English/Content/cas03.pdf.
[120] Kuo, op. cit.

are the right actions to avoid one:

• Assimilate the Uyghur children and force all ethnic minority students to learn

Mandarin, the language of China.

• Minimize and control the influence Islam has over the Uyghurs.

• Reduce the influence of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang by diluting their numbers with an

influx of Han immigrants who are loyal to the government.

• Demand agreements with its Central Asian neighbors not to harbor Uyghur separatists.

• Declare Uyghur organizations outside China as not only separatist but terrorist, and

actively request the countries hosting these organizations to shut them down and arrest

their leaders.[121]

• Try to influence other countries in not giving "airtime" to (i.e., not listen to and

support) members of the Uyghur diaspora who foster support for an independent Eastern

Turkestan.

• Block Radio Free Asia broadcasts in the Uyghur language targeted for Xinjiang.

But what about the unhappy Uyghurs? Even if they were to revolt, I fear they would be

massively put down with an even greater level of repression than they face today. The

Chinese have shown themselves as harsh responders to notions of separatism and

independence. Tibet's experience is not encouraging to the Uyghurs even though the

Tibetans have spokespeople from Hollywood who are skilled in raising visibility for

special causes. Further, the ethnic people of Inner Mongolia have been mostly absorbed

into the dominant Chinese culture, with little left remaining of their ethnic traditions

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[121] "China urged to grant Uighurs freedom," *AFP*, December 21, 2003 (accessed September 2, 2004); available from http://www.uyghuramerican.org/doc/AFP122003.htm.

except for the "theater and museum pieces" that can be performed for tourists.[122] Many

Uyghurs fear that the fate of the Inner Mongolians mirrors their own future.

What is hopeful is that there is discussion among the Uyghurs in Xinjiang that they could

live with Chinese rule if they were allowed to keep their traditions and participate to a

greater extent in Xinjiang's growing economy. According to Marquand,

> "By all accounts, a discussion is now under way among Uighurs about how and
> whether to participate in a Han world. Some Uighur leaders say it is the only
> realistic answer – that the moment has passed for international sympathy for the
> separate state of East Turkestan that many Uighurs claim. They say the only
> question now is the terms under which participation should happen. To not
> participate will only mean further alienation and economic deprivation that will
> set Uighur children further behind."[123]

I think they are right. In spite of efforts engaged by leaders in the Uyghur diaspora to

bring visibility to the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China is going to tightly hold on to the

Xinjiang Region. Attempts to protest or struggle against the Chinese will bring further

difficulty upon themselves.

However, I think the Chinese should *listen* to these people, encourage the moderate

voices, and work closely to create a balance that accommodates the Uyghur lifestyle,

language and cultural traditions, and gives them a greater voice in what is happening to

their region via the "Develop the West" program. First and foremost, poverty alleviation

programs need to be developed for the Uyghurs, especially for the Uyghurs living in

southern Xinjiang. The government needs to take an active role in reducing the high

unemployment levels among the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Job discrimination is disgraceful,

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[122] Fuller and Lipman, op. cit., 345.
[123] Marquand, op. cit.

yet it will continue to be practiced until there is no incentive to do so. Xinjiang's

government needs to take that issue squarely on and resolve it.

Can ICTs be useful in helping the Uyghurs avoid a potential cultural collision?

Maybe. Telecenters, as proposed in this paper, have proven to be a popular means of

providing information access to people who live in remote, rural areas. But even before a

telecenter is installed, a comprehensive assessment needs to be conducted among the

Uyghurs of each oasis in southern Xinjiang (in particular) to determine what exactly is

causing their poverty and forcing them to stay locked into it. Once those conditions are

identified, if ICTs can be helpful in overcoming the causes of poverty in this situation,

then the use of ICTs should be considered as a poverty reduction tool. But ICTs are just

that: a tool. ICTs should be considered among various tools in fostering "pro-poor

change" through strategies that foster broader development and poverty alleviation.

Other relevant tools could be measures to develop human capacity, funds for investment

in private business or available as subsidies for valuable fertilizers, and institutions that

promote the Uyghur culture.

Recent research on the experience of poverty reveals that the poor feel "isolated,

powerless and neglected."[124] My research of the Uyghurs indicates that they maintain a

strong community life within their respective oasis but feel isolated from and

marginalized by the decision-making processes of both national and regional

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[124] Kerry S. McNamara, "Information and Communication Technologies, Poverty and Development: Learning from Experience," A Background Paper for the infoDev Annual Symposium December 9-10, 2003 Geneva, Switzerland, p. 63 (accessed June 2005); available from http://www.infodev.org/content/library/detail/833/.

government. They also feel powerless with respect to the government, in fact, are feeling victimized by it. They resent the government reaching into their lives and controlling their practice of Islam and enforcing assimilation of their children into the dominant Han culture. These government policies exacerbate their feelings of powerlessness and victimization. Further, given their ongoing poverty, it is clear their economic needs are being neglected.

ICTs would be useful in helping give Uyghurs a voice to influence policies that would improve their own economic circumstance. But unfortunately, the CCP's repressive policies are so strong that most Uyghurs are afraid to speak out, especially in any sort of protest against how they are treated. Any form of Uyghur protest today is being interpreted by the government as inspired by separatist thought and subject to some form of retribution, often detainment. So sadly, this valuable function of ICTs as a communications tool that gives impoverished groups a voice to their government representatives may not be used even if offered to them.

However, given current government policy to eliminate the use of the Uyghur language in schools and (according to anecdotal evidence) downplay other aspects of Uyghur culture, this is a good time to use ICTs to preserve their language and culture. If today's assimilative policies continue, I suspect by the time today's elementary school Uyghur children are adults and their parents and grandparents have passed on, the Uyghur culture will have weakened substantially. No doubt this is the government's plan to eliminate the "Uyghur threat" – some Uyghurs in the worldwide diaspora have referred to it as

"cultural genocide."[125] To forestall this eventuality, ICTs would be invaluable to record the language and document the culture as it is practiced today. An "oral history" could be developed from the memories of today's elders that could be passed down to future generations. I fear the Chinese would censor these histories, but the overall idea has merit and is worth considering.

Winning "hearts and minds." Duncan Clark, co-founder of bdaChina, a market research firm focused on China's telecommunications industry, claimed that "government legitimacy in China derives from the ability to improve the daily lot of the masses" (taken from a slide set in a presentation delivered by Mr. Clark near Boston on March 26, 2004). Jiang Zemin and others delivering the CCP party message, have claimed that the primary goal behind the "Develop the West" program is to promote social stability and economic development of China's western regions. The intent thus being to improve the "lot of the masses" and therefore allow the government to maintain its legitimacy. By doing so, China enters a "market for loyalties," an appeal for the "hearts and minds" of an audience and for the allegiance of that audience. From this allegiance emerges a national identity which shares the values of the power structure that created it, allowing that power structure to remain in place.[126] Stability is thus maintained and any unrest minimized. These goals are consistent with those of the "Develop the West" campaign.

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[125] Alim A. Seytoff, "Uyghur American Association Speech at USCIRF Round-table Panel Discussion," no date [USCIRF is the US Commission on International Religious Freedom] (accessed September 2, 2004); available from http://www.uyghuramerican.org/feature/uaa_speech_at_uscirf_round.htm.
[126] Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002), 31-32.

Unfortunately, China will have to do more to capture the "hearts and minds" of the Uyghurs. Listening to the Uyghurs, directly addressing their economic needs, and fighting on their behalf against job discrimination will go a long way toward capturing their loyalty. Releasing the government's tight grip on their culture and traditions will go even further. Bringing the Uyghurs into the information economy is an enormous step into the 21st century for a group of people many of whom are still living in a pre-industrial age society. But these people are not missing the signs of modernization emerging around them. We have already discovered that a mini-IT industry in Xinjiang supports the Uyghurs. If informatization is truly the basis for China's economic reform, then let informatization play a greater role in the "Develop the West" projects, a role that goes beyond the implementation of telecommunications infrastructure and brings a diffusion of information access to all of Xinjiang's population. Let the Uyghurs play an important role in that diffusion and benefit not only from the advantages of information access, but also from the economic opportunities presented by the "Develop the West" program in general. What better way to assure and solidify the legitimacy of the Chinese government in the eyes of this important ethnic minority group?

Map of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Map 2: Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Surrounding Area, including Eight Border Count
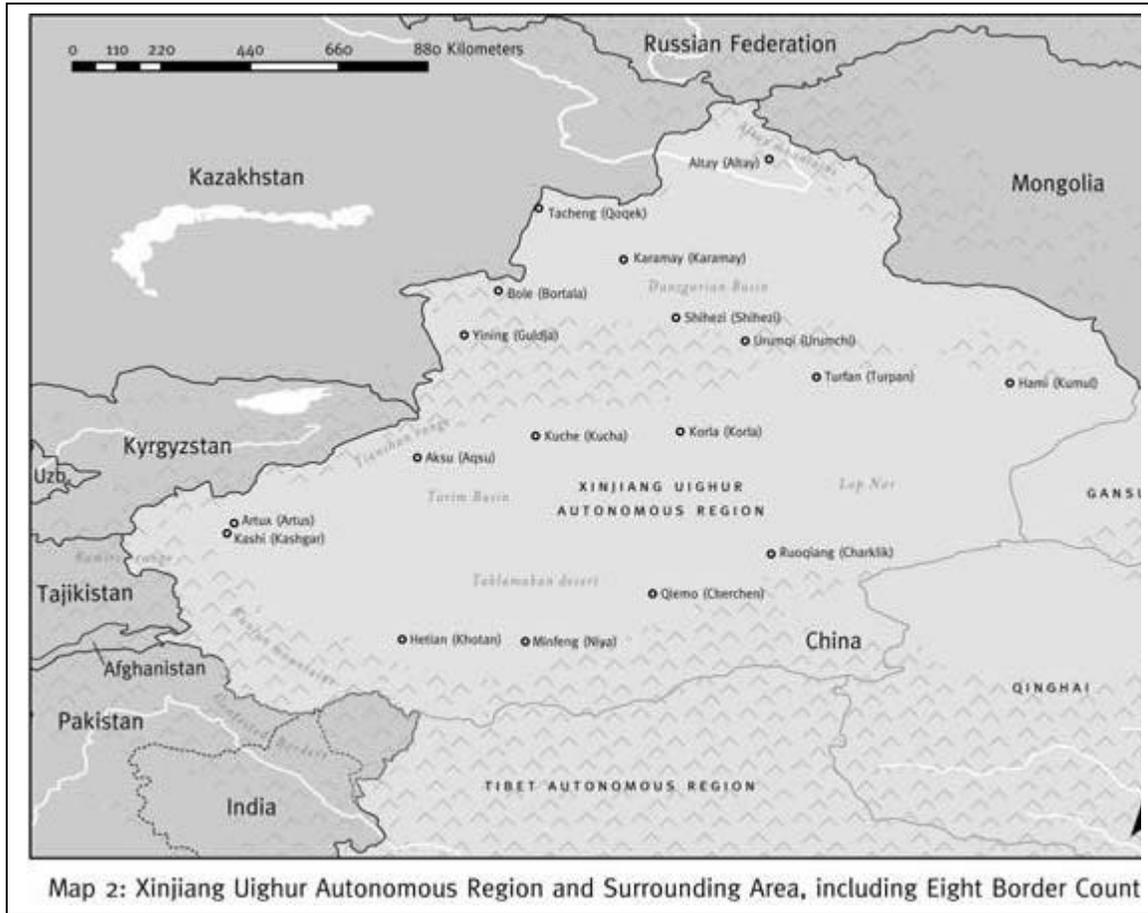
Map copied from Human Rights Watch website on July 6, 2005. Available from http://hrw.org/reports/2005/china0405/china0405_files/image002.jpg

Appendix A

Geography of the XUAR, Uyghur History, Oases and Social Groups

The geography of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (shortened to Xinjiang or XUAR in this document) lies in northwestern China, extending across 1.66 million square kilometers. It makes up one sixth of China's landmass and borders eight countries: Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Given its strategic location, Xinjiang is China's gateway to Central Asia.

Xinjiang's geography is marked by mountains and basins and is divided into three main sub-regions. The Zhungarian Basin lies to the north of the Tian Shan Mountains. The Tarim Basin, which contains the forbidding Taklimakan Desert, lies to the south of the Tian Shan Mountains and is nearly ringed by rugged mountain ranges including the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush. The third region contains the Turpan Depression and lies to the east of the Tian Shan and to the southeast of the Zhungarian Basin. The Flaming Mountains (Qyzyl Tagh) cross it to the north. From the city of Turpan, the depression slopes to the south reaching its lowest point at 161 meters below sea level.[127] Xinjiang's terrain lacks any significant body of water resulting in an extremely dry environment with wide variations in temperature.

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[127] Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China's Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 19.

In spite of its dryness, southern Xinjiang is marked by oases which nearly circle the Taklimakan Desert. The oases lie at the base of the surrounding mountains and receive their water from the snow and glacier melt originating from those mountains. Even though "long stretches of barren gravel and sand"[128] separate the oases and discourage frequent communication among them, it is among these oases where the majority of Uyghurs have made their home.

Xinjiang's population. According to the 2000 census, about 18.5 million people representing a number of ethnic groups live in the region.[129] The Uyghurs make up 46.5% of the population and the Hans are catching up fast at 38.7%.[130] Other ethnic groups living in Xinjiang are the Kazak, Hui (Chinese Muslim), Mongolian, Kirgiz, Xibe, Tajik, Ozbek, Manchu, Daur, Tatar and Russian.[131]

The origins of the Uyghurs. The Chinese place the origins of the Uyghurs in what is today Mongolia, in the Selenza and Orkhon river basins northwest of Ulaan Bator. According to the Chinese, the Uyghurs "sprang" from an ancient tribe called the Teli.[132] In 744 C.E.,[133] they founded an empire or "khanate" located in northwestern Mongolia.

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Stanley W. Toops, "The Demography of Xinjiang," in *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 242.
[130] Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalisation* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 140.
[131] Information Office of China's State Council, *White Paper on the History and Development of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region* (Part One: "Xinjiang Has Been a Multi-ethnic Region Since Ancient Times"), op. cit.
[132] Ibid.
[133] "C.E." refers to Common Era corresponding to AD but is religiously neutral.

The Uyghur Khanate collapsed in 840 C.E. and subsequently, most of the Uyghur people moved westward. One sub-group moved to the modern Turpan area and another sub-group moved to the Central Asian grasslands, scattered from Central Asia to Kashgar. From that period forward, the Tarim Basin and its surrounding area lay under the rule of these early Uyghur people based in Turpan and Kashgar.

Justin Rudelson's research reveals that the term "Uyghur" describes the people who settled in Turpan and does not apply to the subgroup that eventually settled in Kashgar and converted to Islam in the mid-tenth century. From 844-932 C.E., the Turpan Uyghurs were sedentary and oasis-based, and practiced a variety of religious faiths: Buddhism, Manichaeanism, and Nestorian Christianity. From 932-1450, the Uyghurs of Turpan had evolved into an elite Turkic society that primarily practiced Buddhism. The region was known as "Uyghuristan" and the term "Uyghur" was used to distinguish this society from the Islamic Turks living in the west. In the 15th century, the Buddhist Uyghurs converted to Islam and the term "Uyghur" fell into disuse for 500 years.[134]

It was not until the mid-1930s, during a time when intense ethnic hostility flared between the Turkic Muslims and the Chinese Muslim Hui, when the term "Uyghur" came back into use. To resolve the ethnic tension between these Muslim groups, Han Chinese government officials borrowed the Soviet system of ethnic policy and classification used in Central Asia. Under this policy, each ethnic group was given certain political rights per their minority nationality status. This policy seemed to meet with favor among the local ethnic groups in Soviet Central Asia.

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[134] Rudelson, op. cit., 6.

Taking this cue, the Chinese defined the sedentary, oasis-based Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang as "Uyghurs." The term recognized an existing "common culture" that was distinct from the other significant ethnic groups nearby: the nomadic Muslim Kazaks, the Chinese Muslim Hui, and the Hans. Because the term excluded groups that were culturally and linguistically different, it was easier for the Turkic Muslim oasis dwellers to accept it. Even though the label originally referred to a Buddhist people and masked the cultural differences among the oases of the Tarim Basin and other places, it gave a single identity to a large group of people who could now compete with the Hans, the Hui and the Kazaks as a nationality. From now on, "all of the Turkic history of the Xinjiang region, including that of Kashgar, would be interpreted as Uyghur."[135]

This ethnic identity also made the group the largest ethnic group in Xinjiang. They have maintained that position to the turn of the twenty-first century, though as noted earlier, the Hans are rapidly catching up.

The Uyghurs today. There is great diversity among the Uyghurs today in spite of the overriding common characteristics that they are Caucasian, speak the same language, and practice Sunni Islam. Uyghur identity is closely tied to one's native oasis. However, how one "thinks" or perceives the world depends on one's position in Uyghur society as a peasant, a merchant, or an educated "intellectual." These divisions and social distinctions have led to a fragmented society from which it is very difficult for a single nationalistic "identity" to emerge. Let us quickly look at the characteristics and identity associated with each of the major oases, and then examine each of the three levels of

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[135] Ibid., 7.

society. Understanding the relationships that each oasis has with each other and with the rest of China proper will be important when we look later at how the Uyghurs can successfully participate in the information economy.

Primary Uyghur oases. The oases and towns of greatest significance to the Uyghurs are Kashgar, Khotan, Turpan, Hami, Ili and Urumqi, the capital. Urumqi is influential because it is the home of most of the educated elites or "intellectuals" and the seat of the central regional government.

Kashgar Region. Kashgar lies near Xinjiang's southwestern border with Central Asia and is the "Islamic heartland" of Xinjiang.[136] Kashgar's importance grew from it strategic location as an oasis at the point where the northern and southern arms of the Silk Road converged, forming a natural gateway to the mountain passes leading to South and Central Asia. Kashgar was strongly influenced by the Islamic cultures and civilizations lying to the west, particularly in the Ferghana Valley and the Andijan, Khokand and Osh areas.

The Uyghurs in Kashgar possess one of the strongest oasis identities. They hold the strongest anti-Chinese sentiment among all the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and they practice the most conservative Islam in Xinjiang. It is in Kashgar where women completely veil their heads while women in other Uyghur oases wear head-scarves. This is also where hundreds of thousands of Muslims come during "Qurban Heyt," the day when pilgrims make their "hajj" to Mecca. Further, there are more Koranic schools here than in other

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[136] Ibid., 26.

parts of Xinjiang. [137] As a result, the Chinese government, concerned about the strong anti-Chinese sentiment and fearing the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, has more strictly regulated religious education and mosque construction in Kashgar than in other parts of the XUAR.[138]

Khotan. Khotan lies on the southern rim of the Tarim Basin east of Kashgar. It was originally considered outside of Kashgar's Islamic influence because of distance. Because of its remoteness, Khotan has not figured prominently as a central point of cultural or administrative/economic activity.

Ili Region (also known as Kuldja). Traditionally an agricultural, livestock and trading center for northern Xinjiang, the Ili Region has traditionally been a very rich area. Ili lies on the western edge of the Tianshan Mountains near the border with Kazakstan. It is separated from the Tarim Basin by the Tianshan Mountains and was often influenced by the Soviet Union against the Chinese government.

Turpan Region and Hami. The oasis of Turpan resides in eastern Xinjiang, northeast of the Tarim Basin and on the northwest side of the Turpan Depression. Hami lies on the northeast side of the Turpan Depression. Both Turpan and Hami face China and have for the most part remained outside the influence of the oases of the Tarim Basin. The Turpan

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[137] Ibid., 153.
[138] Ibid., 47.

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oasis is considered the "historic center" of Uyghur culture because this is where the "elite" of the Uyghur Empire in northwest Mongolia settled after 840 C.E.[139]

Compared to the Uyghurs of the Tarim Basin oases, the Uyghurs of Turpan and Hami have a more positive attitude toward the Han Chinese, brought on by a longer history of interaction with China and increasing economic opportunities. Compared to other Uyghurs, the peasants of Turpan are relatively pleased with the cultural, economic and religious changes that the government has introduced, and are optimistic about the future.[140]

Uyghur social groups. As mentioned earlier, the Uyghurs in Xinjiang maintain an identity that is closely tied to their native oasis, but how they view the world and the Uyghur's place in it depends on their respective social class and occupation.[141] The Uyghurs are divided into three main social groups: the peasants who are typically engaged in farming, the merchants, and the intellectuals who work as educators or as administrators.[142] All three groups live together in the oases villages, though most intellectuals have gone to Urumqi to live.

Uyghur peasants. Uyghur peasants maintain a strong local identity with their native oasis and do not generally travel outside their respective region. They identify strongly

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[139] Rudelson, op. cit., 30-31.
[140] Ibid., 68.
[141] Ibid., 117.
[142] Ibid., 116.

with Islam. Family ties determine their social networks and relationships.[143] They are

the only people of Central Asia who practice oasis and village endogamy, meaning that

they marry within their native oasis or village. Economic cooperation within the family

network is common, forming a web of informal safety nets. This is important given the

small-scale peasant economy that grew from reforms in 1985 and is dependent on

individual family initiative.[144] In 1985, peasants devoted themselves to subsistence

farming but were free to sell surplus products on the market. In spite of government

efforts to widely develop Xinjiang's economy since then, Uyghur peasants still tend to be

small plot-holders compared to the Hans who farm large tracts of land and can benefit

from economies of scale,[145] benefits beyond the reach of most Uyghurs.

Uyghur merchants. Uyghur merchants are those members of Uyghur society who

engage in trade, either locally or long-distance. All Uyghur merchants practice Islam.

However, unlike conservative Kashgar where anti-Han sentiments are strong and

merchant trade focuses westward, Turpan merchants focus their trade eastward where

they have a history of successful commercial interaction with the Hans. Accordingly,

Turpan merchants have a more positive attitude toward the Hans.

Uyghur intellectuals. The Uyghur intellectuals are the most educated members of

Uyghur society. They work as educators or administrators, functioning as Chinese

Communist Party officials, writers, historians, and professors.

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[143] Ibid., 107.
[144] Ibid., 109.
[145] John Pomfret, "Go West, Young Han," *The Washington Post*, September 15, 2000 (accessed May 12, 2005); available from http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/55/470.html.

Most intellectuals live in Urumqi though they maintain ties to their respective native oases. They are more influenced by international events than other Uyghur groups and identify with the larger Turkic world of western Central Asia and Turkey. They tend to be pan-Turkic nationalists and oppose the Hans. Their citizenship in a multi-ethnic Chinese "province" does not play a large role in their identity. They consider themselves Muslims but are also secularist, and strongly reject Islamic conservatism. They believe Islam "contributes to Uyghur passivity by stifling secular educational development and modernization."[146] However, this issue creates a dilemma for them: their children must learn Mandarin Chinese if they are going to compete with the Hans. However, Uyghur intellectual parents struggle to preserve their Uyghur culture and language while developing the ability to compete nationally. Sending their children to Uyghur-speaking or Chinese-speaking schools has been part of this dilemma. Experience has shown that children attending the Chinese-speaking schools generally end up with weak Uyghur language skills causing an important part of their ethnic identity to fade. Now that Mandarin-language instruction is required in all schools, the dilemma is heightened for these parents. Private language instruction at home may be one of their last options to keep their language alive.

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[146] Rudelson, op. cit., 121.

Appendix B

Following is a summary of the main themes found in the textbook entitled *Preserve the Unity of the Motherland (Nationalities Solidarity Education Book),* published in August, 1996 by Xinjiang People's Publishing House. [147] This summary was prepared by the US Embassy in Beijing and the text is taken from its website. Filled with CCP propaganda, this book is presumably used as a text during Xinjiang's National Unity Day program conducted throughout Xinjiang's school system every May.

- o National "splittism": "Splittists use matters like Xinjiang history, nationalities policy, resources development and exploitation, environmental protection and minorities family planning to stir people up against the communist party and the government."
- o Illegal religious activities: "Religious schools and religious activities have often been used as a cover for splittist and terrorist activities…"
- o Xinjiang has been part of the Chinese motherland since ancient times.
- o China is easy to unify, hard to divide. The autonomous regions concept is a brilliant solution to the minorities problem for China, a country with 56 different nationalities. Autonomy makes each nationality master in its own house.
- o The equality of all the nationalities is a basic Marxist principle and the fundamental policy of the Chinese Communist Party. The problem is not whether more Han are moving into minority areas but whether the Han inmigration promotes economic development and so betters the lives of minority people.
- o The common interest of all the Chinese people is the highest good. The lesson we learned during the Cultural Revolution is that we must respect that particular interests of minority peoples.
- o Central government support has been essential to the development of Xinjiang. Half (56.8 percent) of the Xinjiang autonomous region budget has been covered by the central government during 1950 - 1994. Each five year plan has seen steadily growing support for Xinjiang from 8.2 billion rmb in 1981 - 1985, to 17.9 billion rmb during 1986 - 1990 and 34.5 billion rmb during 1991 - 1994. During the 1980s the central government began oil exploration and development in the Tarim, Turfan and Hami basins. The central government has invested in Xinjiang's cotton industry. The Xinjiang construction and production corps has made great contributions to Xinjiang agriculture and industry.
- o Xinjiang's natural resources are being exploited to bring prosperity to all the nationalities of Xinjiang. Western China should use its natural resources to accelerate its development. Although Xinjiang exports raw materials to eastern china and imports finished goods this situation is completely different from imperialist exploitation. Xinjiang gets many subsidies and many special concessions in its trade with eastern China.

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[147] Embassy of the United States of America in China, op. cit.

Xinjiang's development is not just a matter for the 16 million people of Xinjiang but for all 1.2 billion people of China. Developing national resources is a sovereign right and benefits all China's nationalities.

- o Family planning is China's basic policy essential to the survival and development of the Chinese nation. China's population puts tremendous pressure on China's resources and environment. China's minorities have now realized the importance of family planning and have reduced their birth rates. The Xinjiang birth rate fell from 30.03 per thousand in 1988 to 24.55 per thousand in 1994.
- o Religious activities must stay within the confines of the law. We must fully implement the religious policy of the Communist Party. Marx said that religion cannot be eliminated; it can only fade away naturally. In China, religious freedom is guaranteed. People may not be discriminated against because of their religious beliefs. Religious groups may not be controlled by foreign organizations. The PRC has never forgotten the lesson of history of how foreign powers used religion to invade China. We must resolutely oppose people who take advantage of the simple national and religious feeling of the people to stir up religious passions, holy war, and separatism.
- o We must all hold fast to the Marxist view of history and nationalities.

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